THE

Dignity and Duty of a Married State.

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

CELEBRATION

OF A

MARRIAGE,

IN THE

Engliſh Epiſcopal Church at *Amſterdam.*

HEBR. xiii. iv.

Marriage is honourable in all.

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The Second Edition.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by *H. Hills*, in *Black-Friars*, near the Water-ſide. For the Benefit of the Poor.

THE PREFACE

IT is not usual to send single Sermons abroad, without the Recommendation of a publick Command; nor is it customary to preach at a Marriage, which was the Occasion of the following Sermon. But as there is no Law nor Reason to hinder the one; so it would seem that the other has been formerly done, and still our Liturgy supposes that it may and will be done: For the Exhortation after Marriage, is appointed to be used only in case there should be no Sermon on the Subject.

Having obtain'd from the most Venerable Burgomasters of Amsterdam, amongst other Privileges, that of Marrying according to the Manner prescribed by our Church; I judged my self obliged to preach on the first occasion of doing so. Here is the Discourse I then had, and I yield to the desire of publishing it, for the same Reasons I first preach'd it; that I may give my small help towards retrieving the Honour of Marriage, which has been so often burlesqu'd, and run down by the Licentiousness of the Stage. The Impious Railleries and profane Witticisms which have been uttered about this matter, are regarded as Maxims of undoubted Truth; those are laughed at who make Marriage their Choice, as they are pity'd who are under any necessity of engaging into it.

This Mockery and Contempt of Marriage, as it is most prejudicial to the Civil State; so it has contributed very much to the growth of Atheism: for it has encouraged those unlawful Liberties, which are taken both in and without Wedlock, which cannot be defended otherwise than by denying a God, or the Authority of Sacred Scripture. When Men are byas'd, weak Arguments prevail, and any thing is readily received which flatters their Lusts and vicious Inclinations. Debauchees think it their Interest that there be no God, that Religion be discarded, and so are easily drawn to deny and disown them. And for this cause it is necessary, as to maintain the Foundation of Religion, so to vindicate its holy Institutions from the blasphemous Aspersions cast upon them; which beget a Prejudice both against them and all Religion in general. I have not that Opinion of my self, or of my performances, as to think that they alone can stop the Mouths of Gainsayers: I only desire to shew my Good-will, and offer my Endeavours. It is not absolutely necessary that all of an Army be Heroes, a Victory may be, and is often forwarded by many who cannot pretend to that Character. I have not said all that might; but what is said, is certain and evident: Yet I should not be surpris'd if the Truth of it be not admitted; nay, if many entertain our Attempt with Scorn. The Corruption of this Age is too deeply rooted, to be plucked up at the very first: But, Whether they will hear, or whether they forbear, they should know, that there have have been Prophets among them.

HE-

HEBREWS xiii. 4.

Marriage is Honourable in all.

MARRIAGE being Common and Ordinary, a Diſcourſe about it may be thought needleſs, and to ſome unpleaſing; but I do judge it neither needleſs nor improper. For it fares with Marriage as with moſt things common and ordinary, that tho' in themſelves very valuable, yet they are but little regarded; ſo that the Generality are not ſenſible of the Good of them, nor yet ſuitably thankful for the Benefit of them. Wherefore I ſhall lay hold on the preſent Occaſion to diſcourſe of this Subject, which however common and ordinary, I believe not well underſtood; the Dignity and Importance of which are ſet forth in the words of St. *Paul* I have now read.

In the Original, it is only *Marriage honourable in, with or among all*: ſo that ſomething muſt be ſupply'd to make the Senſe clear and perfect, wherefore ſome render it by way of an Affirmative Propoſition, as in our Tranſlation, whereby the Dignity of Marriage is aſſerted; others turn it into a Precept, requiring all to hold Matrimony honourable, as if it ſhould be, *Let Marriage be honourable.*

It is not material whether it be taken the one or the other way; for if it be a Duty to hold Marriage honourable, then it is ſo, becauſe it is in it ſelf honourable; and if marriage be by Nature, or by Virtue of its Ends and Uſes honourable, then it is the Duty of all to honour it, and to have it in great Eſteem: So whether the Text be an Affirmative Propoſition or a Precept, it eſtabliſheth the Dignity and Importance of Marriage; for whatever is or ſhould be eſteem'd honourable, muſt be ſuppos'd excellent in its Nature, and important in its Effects and Conſequences. In handling this matter, I ſhall do Two Things: *Firſt*, I ſhall give ſome

Reasons why Marriage should be had in great Honour and Esteem. *Secondly*, I shall shew what is incumbent on those who enter into this State of Life, that they may reap the Good, Benefit, and Comfort of it.

I. *First*, Of the Reasons why Marriage should be had in great Honour and Esteem. To mention all, and to enlarge upon them, would take up too much time; therefore I shall only name some. And first, Marriage should be held honourable, because it is an ancient and universal Custom. Antiquity is venerable, and it is both just and usual, to regard with Veneration those Things that are of long standing. Indeed Time doth not change the Nature of Things, nor can it make that which is evil ever to be good; but both good and innocent Things are deservedly more respected, as they are the older: Now marriage is as ancient as any thing can be. 'Twas from the beginning, and commenc'd with Mankind it self. If the Calculation of some may be believ'd, Man was married on the very day he was made, and when he was but some few hours old: And what was so early begun, has ever since continued. Whithersoever Men Transported themselves, they carried the Custom; so that there never was any Nation or People which did not observe it. The most Barbarous do not live like Beasts promiscuously; and even where unlawful Liberties were common and allowed, yet Marriage was preferr'd, and accounted honourable. Where-ever Knowledge, Policy and good Government took place, and were cultivated, Marriage was distinguish'd with particular marks of Honour. Among the *Romans*, married Persons had divers Privileges above others, until the days of *Constantine*, who abolish'd those Laws, to gratifie some who betook themselves to a Celibate State, from a mistaken Notion which then prevail'd, that it was more proper for the Exercise of Religion, which was the Beginning of that Corruption and Apostacy, foretold by the Apostle, 1 *Tim.* iv. 1. The *Lacedemonians* held marriage so proper and necessary, and them who despis'd it so unreasonable and dangerous, that they appointed a Fine both for them who married not at all, and for them who were late or long a marrying. How honourable

nourable Marriage was, is evident from the Solemnities every where uſed at the entring into it; for this was and is a publick Declaration that it was an honourable State, and that they were worthy of Honour who enter'd into it. Hence came the Saying, That every one had Three Days of chief Honour; the Day of one's Birth, the Day of Marriage, and the Day of Death or Burying.

2. But, *Secondly*: Chriſtians have a better Precedent for honouring Marriage, than the Example of Men and Nations. We have the Example of *Chriſt*, the Eternal Son of God, whoſe Example outweighs the Authority and Practice of all others in the World. Indeed he Himſelf did not marry, nor could He, becauſe a marriage with any ſingle Perſon on Earth could not ſuit with his Dignity, nor the end of his Coming to the World: But he would be born of a Woman, join'd in lawful Wedlock; and He gave the firſt Manifeſtation of his Glory at a marriage in *Cana* of *Galilee*, where he turned Water into Wine; not for the ſimple Oſtentation of his own Power, but alſo to contribute to that innocent Joy, which was ſuitable to that Occaſion. This He would not have done, if marriage was either unlawful or trivial, and not worthy of all Honour. And as his ſhewing Himſelf thus firſt at a Marriage, was not Accidental or Occaſional, but Choice; ſo he choſe to do it, that he might ſet forth the Honourableneſs of this State; foreſeeing that ſome falſe Spirits would ariſe to diſcredit and diſparage marriage: And certainly, whoever ſpeak againſt it, whoever repreſent it as unlawful, or as mean and unbecoming a good or wiſe Man, or the aim or ſtudy of Perfection; I ſay, whoever do ſo, do thereby ſhew that they are not of God. For,

3. *Thirdly*: Marriage is a Divine Inſtitution. God is the Author of it. 'Twas no Invention of Man; nor were they led into it by Policy, Neceſſity or Experience, as into many other common Cuſtoms, but God himſelf from the Beginning did ordain it. He at the firſt made Man male and female, and joined them together, that *the two might become one Fleſh*, for an Example to others that ſhould follow. He commanded and ordained them to multiply and bring forth

their Kind; but only in the State of Wedlock, and by the Imitation of that Example which he had set them in the first Man and Woman. If therefore all Divine Ordinances and Institutions should be honoured for God's sake, so should marriage; nor can any speak dishonourably of it, without blaspheming God, and reflecting on either his Authority or Wisdom.

4. *Fourthly*: The time when marriage was instituted, adds to the Honour of it. This was before the Fall, in the State of Innocence, while Man was in his Uprightness, as he came from the Hands of God; which proves Marriage to be suitable to the greatest Perfection and Purity of this present Life. It came not as a Remedy to After-Corruption; 'twas not prescribed to avoid greater Inconveniencies, but the Wisdom of God saw it agreeable to a Paradise, to the purest and most perfect Condition of humane Life: Therefore they talk falsly who make this State inconsistent with Religion; and they are weak and ignorant Persons, who pretend that it is a clog or hindrance to their Virtue and Devotion; yea, even to the Perfection of them. Indeed we read of some, who when they were called to the Divine Feast, excused themselves because they were married: *I have married a Wife, and cannot come*; but this was only a Pretext to cover their Aversion and Unwillingness, for if they had valued the mercy of the Call, and been willing to embrace it, their marriage needed not to have hindred them, they would have come and brought their Wives with them. Turn over the History of all the Celibates from the beginning, can any be shewed more just and upright than *Noah*, more constant in his Faith and Obedience than *Abraham*, more holy and devout than *Job*? and yet they, as all the other Scripture Worthies, were married, and some of them but very indifferently too. Indeed there are Temptations and Incumbrances in a married State, and so there are in a single Life. God may be served in the one as well as the other; and who excuse themselves on the account of either, do but declare that they have not a real mind to it.

Finally,

Finally, Marriage ought to be held moſt honourable, for the important End of it, and the good Effects which were intended by it, and which will follow thoſe who ſeek and ſtudy them aright. When God had finiſhed the Creation, He viewed all his Works, and ſaw them all very good: Now Woman was included in theſe Works, therefore ſhe alſo was found good, and conſequently marriage is very good and uſeful; for the Woman was created for that end. As all God's Works are good, ſo are all his Ordinances and Inſtitutions, and particularly this of Marriage.

Therefore, ſaith *Solomon*, *Whoſever findeth a Wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord*; meaning, as he explains himſelf in other places, a prudent, virtuous Wife; one that deſerves that Honour, and anſwers the Character ſuitable to it. God by ordaining marriage, intended the Good both of private Perſons and the Publick; becauſe it was moſt agreeable to our Nature, and did naturally tend to further the Happineſs of all in this preſent Life. Indeed marriage is a Yoke, which once taken on, cannot be put off till Death; or that which is worſe than Death, I mean the heinous Sin and Guilt of one or other of the Parties: but it is a profitable Yoke, and it may be made eaſie too, if Perſons have the Underſtanding to uſe it aright. *Prov.* 18. 22.

1. *Firſt*, Marriage bringeth great Advantage to private Perſons, by ſecuring them of a conſtant, intimate and familiar Friend. Society and Friendſhip are the Life of Life. Nothing is more agreeable to our Nature, nothing more deſirable. It is as natural for Man to crave them, as for the Sparks to fly upward. Hence *Ariſtotle* obſerved, that what delighted in ſolitarineſs, muſt be either above or below a Man; that is, either a God or a Beaſt: A God, becauſe Self-ſufficient; or a Beaſt, without Senſe or Underſtanding, and ſo unable to communicate it ſelf, as inſenſible of the Benefit of mutual Communication: But as moſt Beaſts, except the Savage Kind, even love to herd together; ſo if this Philſopher had had that Light of Revelation which we are bleſs'd with, he would have found that the Godhead is not ſolitary, though Unity

be one of its Essential Attributes. Our Religion shews us Three Persons in the Godhead, which are one in Nature, and intimately united both in their Counsels and in the Execution of them, which makes the Felicity of the Godhead equal to the Perfection of its Nature, both of them Incomprehensible and Infinite. The more Noble any Being is, the more it affects Society and Fellowship. Because God is infinitely good, He created other Beings to partake of Himself, and by that participation to declare his Glory. Man was made after the Image of God, and consequently it must be natural to Man to seek the Fellowship of others that are after his own likeness. When God made Man an consider'd him, He saw 'twas not good for him to be alone, and for that cause proceeded to make Woman, to be a Help meet for Man. The Dominion of the World and over all Creatures, would not have given unto Man full Satisfaction, if he had been left alone without such a Companion. Let outward Circumstances be never so good, there is but half Contentment without a Friend and Copartner. 'Tis true, there is and may be a dear, a sweet and intimate Friendship between one Man and another, but the Pleasure and Benefit of such a Friendship cannot be always enjoy'd. Duty and Interest often separate them, whereas marriage, by these very Ties of Duty and Interest, makes one sure of a faithful, loving and inseparable Friend at all Times, and in all Circumstances, whether better or worse. A Man must leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife, and so must the Wife do to her Husband. Besides, God has so framed the Nature of Woman, and given her such particular Endowments, as render her Conversation more grateful and agreeable. The Friendship of a Man may chance to be more instructive, and may sometimes have the preference for Counsel and Advice; but a good Woman has more Charms to divert the Fancy, to ease the Spirit, and to alleviate the Mind. It is a true and notable Saying of the Son of *Syrach*, *Eccles.* xl. 23. *A Friend and Companion never meet amiss; but above both is a Wife with her Husband.* The Sweetness and Delicacy of her Temper is proper to file off that Roughness, which is ready to grow upon the Nature of Man.

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Therefore commonly ſingle Perſons are more moroſe and ſurly, and leſs converſible, than thoſe who are well married, eſpecially if naturally peeviſh and melancholly; for theſe grow upon Men by the loneſomneſs of a ſingle Life. Indeed an ill Woman frets the Spirit and cruſhes the Mind; but an excellent Wife is to her Husband as *David*'s Harp to *Saul*, ſhe charms away the evil Spirit of Melancholy, which is apt to ſeize men by the Vexation of Buſineſs, the Incumbrances of Affairs, and the Impertinencies of the World.

Again: Marriage is of great Advantage to private Perſons, becauſe of the mutual help which they give to each other: God did not intend that the Woman ſhould be a Clog, or Burden, or Incumbrance to a Man; He did not ordain her to live idlely or ſumptuouſly on the Sweat of his Face; but he made her to be a Help unto him; that is, to be both a Companion and Aſſiſtant, to partake of his Labours, to bear half of his Burden, as well as to ſhare of his Happineſs. He that has a prudent Wife, has double the Hands, the Eyes, the Ears and the Feet of a ſingle Perſon. He can be at Home and Abroad at once; She can manage the Affairs of the Houſe, while he is tranſacting Buſineſs Abroad; and ſo is in a better way of Thriving, of promoting the end of Life, and of providing for the Neceſſities and Comforts of it. Some may think that all this may be as well done by Servants; but a little Reflection on Experience ſhew it a miſtake, for though great Wages may make a Servant faithful, they cannot give that Concernment which a Wife hath. Wherefore the wiſe Author I laſt quoted, ſaith, 'Bleſſed is the Man that hath a 'virtuous Wife, for the number of his Days ſhall bedouble. A 'virtuous Woman rejoyceth her Husband, and he ſhall fulfil the Years of his Life in peace. A good Wife is a good 'portion, which ſhall be given in the portion of them that 'fear the Lord. The Grace of a Wife delighteth her Huſband, and her Diſcretion will fat his Bones. A ſilent and 'loving Woman is a gift of the Lord, and there is nothing 'ſo much worth to a mind well inſtructed. A modeſt and 'faithful Woman is a double Grace, and her continent mind 'cannot be valued. As the Sun when it riſeth in the high

'Heaven,

' Heaven, ſo is the Beauty of a Wife in the ordering of her ' Houſe. *Again he ſaith*, The Beauty of a Woman chear-' eth the Countenance, and a Man loveth nothing better; if ' there be kindneſs, meekneſs and comfort in her Tongue, ' then is not her Husband like other Men. He that getteth ' a Wife, beginneth a poſſeſſion, a help like unto himſelf, ' and a pillar of Reſt. *Eccleſ.* xxvi. and xxxvii.

Thus private Perſons have great Advantage by marriage. In the next place, the Publick receiveth no leſs Profit by it. For by this means Children are multiplied, and the People increaſed; which is the Strength, Security and Glory of a State. Unlawful Liberties without Wedlock, add little to the Increaſe of People; nor even in thoſe Countries where pluralities of Wives are allowed, is it common and uſual to have ſo many Children, as with us by one Man and one Woman. So marriage, according to its firſt Inſtitution is more for the multiplication of Mankind, than any other way.

And as it tendeth to the Increaſe of People, which is for the good of the Publick, ſo it is the beſt Security of a good Education to them that are born, which is no leſs for the publick Good. If Children were not taken care of, they could not live to be Men; and if they were not well educated and train'd up to ſome Art or Profeſſion, they would be of little uſe when grown up; both which would be very much neglected, if Children were not born as now in lawful Wedlock. Women perhaps might have ſome regard to the Fruit of their Womb, but Men would take little thought of thoſe, whom they knew not whether they were their own. But as it is now, Parents love their Children, and lay themſelves out to provide for them, to educate them well, and to make them happy; all which turneth to the Advantage of the Publick.

It was very inadvertently ſaid of a * Great Man, That *Wives and Children were Impediments to great Enterpriſes of either Virtue or Miſchief, and that the beſt Works, and of*

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* *Lord* Bacon, *in his Eſſays.*

greateſt

greateſt Merit to the Publick, were perform'd by unmarried or Childleſs Men; For the very contrary may be proved from Hiſtory. And who can be thought more concerned for the Publick, than they who are to leave with it their Darlings, and the Pledges of their Affection? Commonly ſingle Perſons look no further than their own Times, but thoſe who are married, extend their Thoughts and Care to Poſterity. Nor are they who are married and have Children, more obnoxious to Bribery, and perverting of publick Juſtice; for a Servant may be worſe than a Wife, and do often abuſe the Maſter's Ear more. Nor are Wife and Children a hindrance to Charitable Works; which is one pretended Reaſon why marriage is forbidden the Clergy in the Church of *Rome*; for Covetouſneſs and Selfiſhneſs prevail among them that are not married, as much as with thoſe that are. There are as many of the one as of the other, ſtingy, narrow-ſoul'd, and hard-hearted, both to themſelves and others, neither given to good Works. Indeed, thoſe that have no Children ſhould give more as they are more able; but thoſe that have Children, have yet a greater Obligation to be Charitable, even that they may ſecure a Bleſſing to their Children, which may and will be more ſteadable, than a viſible Inheritance, which often ſlippeth away: For, ſaith *David, I have been young and now am old, yet have I not ſeen the Righteous*, that is, the merciful Man, *forſaken, not his Seed begging Bread; he is ever merciful and lendeth, and his Seed is bleſſed*, Pſal. xxxvii. 25. Thus you ſee, that there are a great many Reaſons, why marriage ſhould be honourable among all, as is aſſerted or injoin'd in the Text. I proceed to

II. The other Thing propoſed; which is to ſhew, What is Incumbent on thoſe who enter a married State, to the end that they may reap the Good, Benefit and Comfort of it.

This is important and neceſſary, but very little conſidered; and that is the reaſon why thoſe Advantages of Marriage are not ſo common. Marriage is not a *Phyſical* but a *Moral* Cauſe of them, they follow not joining of Hands neceſſarily, as the Fire burneth; or as Meat nouriſheth, which

happens

happens whether we think of them or not: But how good ſoever a married State be, the Benefit and Comfort of it depend on the wiſe Behaviour of thoſe who enter into it. If they remember their Obligation, and ſtudy their Duty, they ſhall be happy; but otherwiſe, both Shame and Miſery will attend them. There are indeed many unhappy Marriages in the World; there are very many rendred miſerable by coming into this State of Life, but it is their own Fault, becauſe they engag'd unadviſedly, nor mind what ſuch Engagements require of them. They run into this ſtate for ſome preſent Satisfaction or Advantage; and having got that, they become uneaſie with the perpetual Tie. They do not conſider the Neceſſity of yielding to one another; but as before, they continue altogether Selfiſh and Humourſom, craving to be pleaſed, but are at no pains to pleaſe thoſe they are joined with. Such were mad to marry; and by marrying, they have entail'd both Guilt and Miſery on themſelves for Life. The Man or Woman that marries, muſt reſolve to deny themſelves, to put off at leaſt ſomething of their own Humour, and to put on a ready Complaiſance with others; otherwiſe they can never be happy: They muſt reſolve by all means to ſeek to pleaſe and gratifie, tho with ſome reſtraint on their perſonal Inclinations and Conſtitutions. Nor on this Account ſhould marriage be reckon'd a Slavery; for this is no more than what common Converſation, and the engaging into any Society oblige one to: He ſhould be debarred all Company, and excluded all Society, that requires every body to humour and yield to him, without ſuitable returns; they do not underſtand either Honour, Liberty, or reaſonable Satisfaction, who are uneaſie with the Obligation of pleaſing and gratifying others. Certainly a Noble Soul and a generous Mind, will take more delight in the Occaſions and Opportunities of doing a Pleaſure to others, than in the Services paid to themſelves. Man and Wife may reaſon together, but ſhould never ſcold and rail, nor uſe contemptuous Speeches. Perſons have often occaſion of being angry with themſelves, and ſo there may happen juſt Occaſions for

both

both Man and Wife their ſhewing ſome diſpleaſure with each other; but it can never be juſt to do it, to the breach of Peace and Love. They muſt not divide and quarrel, however they may reaſon, except in caſes where true Honour, Conſcience, Religion, and the Cauſe of God do interpoſe. God muſt be pleaſed above all, He muſt be preferr'd to Husband or Wife; but if nothing be requir'd which diſpleaſeth God, any thing ſhould be done, rather than ſuffer a Breach; for better any Inconvenience than that. Husband and Wife ſhould endeavour all that is poſſible to make one another eaſie, by mutual pleaſing: This is both their Duty and their Intereſt; for it is one end of the Inſtitution. They are neither wiſe nor virtuous, who contend and jar for ſmall and trivial Things, and commonly the Ruptures betwixt married Perſons, are only for ſuch Things: For the generality of Mankind let their Paſſions maſter their Reaſon, and are ſo fooliſhly fond of their Humours, as for them to quit their Intereſt. There is a moſt remarkable Inſtance of this in the Hiſtory of *Peru*; which ſhews the extravagancy and miſchief of Humour and Paſſion, when not curbed. There was one by the misfortune of Shipwreck caſt upon a barren deſolate Rock, where there was neither Man nor Beaſt, nor ſhelter againſt Wind or Weather: In this miſerable place he lived two Years; and then Providence ſent thither in the like manner another. The Comfort of a Companion was certainly moſt valuable, and the only mitigation of that miſerable Condition. If they had united heartily, there might be ſome abatement of it; but they ſoon quarrel'd for ſome ſmall matter, and their Difference grew to that height, that they parted, and lived at the diſtance of the Rock from one another; neither, for the ſpace of Seven Years, if I can remember right, ſpoke together, or ſaw one another: So, out of croſſneſs of Humour, they deprived themſelves of the Comfort and Advantage which Converſation and mutual Concurrence and Aſſiſtance might have given: This is a Parallel of that Man and Woman, who through Providence are tied for Life by the Bond of marriage, but ſo little wiſe for themſelves, that

that rather than forego their peeviſh and pettiſh Humours; they chuſe to throw up their Comforts, and to make their Condition more miſerable.

As the ſtudying to pleaſe to the utmoſt is incumbent on married Perſons, ſo for this Cauſe Love is required and abſolutely neceſſary. It is hard to ſtudy to pleaſe thoſe who are not well liked. Where there is Love, there is a forwardneſs to pleaſe; but if Love be wanting, it is ſhifted or awkardly perform'd; therefore they who enter a married State ſhould be brought into it by Love. Love ſhould be the principal motive that brings them together; and while they are together, it ſhould be their Care to cultivate and improve it. If Love be wanting, they will be a grief and a burden to each other; but if Love abound, they have all Joy and Contentment. Where there is Love, they part with Reluctancy, and meet with Pleaſure; their Hearts burn with Deſires when abſent, and if preſent they live joyfully together, as *Solomon* injoins. Love will keep the Woman from gadding Abroad, and 'twill make the Man impatient to come home. *St. Paul* ſaith, That *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*, concerning our Neighbour; and ſo it may be ſaid of the Duties of Marriage. Love both teaches them, and prompts to the Obſervance of them: For all that is injoin'd Husband and Wife, are only proper Expreſſions and Declarations of true Love. He that loveth his Wife, will be far from abuſing her, or treating her roughly; he will honour her himſelf, and endeavour to have her honour'd by others: He will deal tenderly by her, and cheriſh her to the utmoſt of his power; he will not deny her the Satisfactions that are reaſonable and in his power, but will be active and induſtrious to provide for her. And if the Man do this, the Woman muſt be unnatural, if ſhe be not gained by it. The Wife muſt love too; and if ſhe love, nothing injoined will be grievous. Obedience which ſounds ſo hard and ſo harſh to ſelf-willed and unthinking Woman, will not be unpleaſant to her that loves: For Love is obſequious and obſervant, and is glad of the Occaſions and Opportunities of teſtifying it. The Obedience of the Wife is indiſpenſible;

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but if there be Love, it will not be complain'd of. By exacting Obedience, the Wife is not ſo hardly dealt with; for it is eaſier to obey than to command aright, and the Praiſe of Obedience may be due, where there is no Honour in Commanding. It is an expreſs and often repeated Command of God, that the Woman be obedient, and it becomes her to be ſo, even where the Man does not perſonally deſerve it; and then ſhe ſhews her regard for God, which is her Praiſe, and for which ſhe ſhall be ſurely rewarded.

Finally: To enſure and compleat the Happineſs of a married State, both Husband and Wife muſt with all care mind Religion, and keep up the Fear of God between them. This is the ſureſt way to prevent Miſcarriages; to ſecure againſt all Ruptures, and to engage to the right and ſerious performance of all Things proper and neceſſary, to promote the Peace and Happineſs of this State. Religion makes all Things ſure; it ties the Knot harder, and makes both willing to bear the Yoke. If the true Fear of God poſſeſs the Heart of Man and Wife, neither of them ſhall go aſtray, nor be liable to the Rack of Jealouſie: No uneaſie Suſpicions ſhall diſturb their Breaſts. They will not provoke, but cheriſh one another. They will be ſtudious to pleaſe when out of Sight, as well as in it; and whether abſent or preſent, will be equally Faithful. Where the true Fear of God is, there will be no occaſion for Exhortations and Perſuaſions, for each will be forward to all Duty. If Perſons underſtood it, true Piety has the greateſt Charms, nor do they fade with Age. And the greateſt Contentment may be expected from a Religious Husband, and a Pious Wife. This is more to be valued, than all thoſe Things which are now the common Motives to Marriage. This is better than Houſes or Poſſeſſions, than Bags of Money, or Tuns of Gold. *Favour*, ſaith *Solomon*, *is deceitful, and Beauty is vain*; *but a Woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be praiſed*, Prov. xxxi. 30. Beſides, the Fear of God bringeth his Bleſſing, which contributes more to Peace and Happineſs, than all our own Endeavours, or any outward or viſible Means. *Except the Lord build the Houſe, they labour*

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in vain that build it. And as He buildeth the Houſe, ſo *He maketh them that are in it to be of one Mind.* All Bleſſings are promiſed to them that fear the Lord, and particularly thoſe of a married State, as you may ſee *Pſal.* cxxxi. Thus I have run through the Chief Things incumbent on Man and Wife, that they may reap the Good and Comfort of a married State. pray God that all concern'd may remember, conſider and obſerve theſe Things, which would make the Church Glorious, the State Proſperous, and increaſe the Peace of Families: This would make the preſent Generation happy, and would draw down and entail a Bleſſing on Poſterity.

Now unto God, who is the Author of all Good, the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, be all Glory, Honour and Praiſe, now and for ever. Amen.

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FINIS.